

bushy as is the usual habit of these trees. They were all healthy and bearing fruit, the ground well cultivated and fertilised with cow manure. The soil where all these trees are growing is quite wet, but not boggy.

In April 1973 over three inches of rain was recorded in 24 hours, and there had been other earlier good falls of rain.

During the winter I examined a group of young Quandong trees on Nungarin road, about five miles north of Nokanning. There were 128 small trees in the group ranging in height from six inches to almost 2 ft. The little trees looked healthy and were growing close to one mature Quandong tree which appeared rather old and straggly. I dug around some of the little trees with a spade to see if they were connected by a root system, but they had germinated from seed.

There was a big, old eucalypt growing close to the trees otherwise the area was clear of trees or scrub, except for a heavy covering of grass and wild oats around the trees. The land was low-lying and appeared to receive a lot of water as run-off from the railway line near by.

## THE BIRDS OF BALD ISLAND

By G. T. SMITH

### INTRODUCTION

Bald Island is 45 km east of Albany and lies 1.2 km from the mainland. It is a small island of 770 ha, 4.6 km by 2.3 km at its widest point, bounded by a steep escarpment with numerous heavily vegetated gullies running into the sea.

Storr (1965), who visited the island from May 30 to June 4, 1959, has described the geology, vegetation and birds of the island. He classified the vegetation into six formations:— Succulent mat (*Carpobrotus aequilaterus*, *Displyna australe*, *Rhagodia baccata*); Tussock land (*Poa caespitosa*, *Scirpus nodosus*, *Lepidosperma gladiatum*); Heath (*Melaleuca parviflora*, *M. microphylla*, *Thryptomene saxicola*); Peppermint scrub (*Agonis flexuosa*); Bushy Yate forest (*Eucalyptus lehmannii*); Teatree forest (*Melaleuca pubescens*).

This article lists the birds recorded on two short trips to the island on October 27-29, 1971 and April 29 to May 3, 1976.

### BIRD LIST

Little Penguin, *Eudyptula minor*. Common around the NW, N and NE sides of the island. The sandy gullies running into Barker Bay on the north side had large numbers of burrows, probably of this species.

Great-winged Petrel, *Pterodroma macroptera*. Burrows of this species were common in the NW half of the island, wherever the sand was deep enough. Found in the Succulent mat, Tussock land, Peppermint scrub and *Melaleuca lanceolata* thickets. Burrows were found from the coast to the top of the island, and were most common in the tussock land and teatree forest.

In October three chicks were found, all were in down with the primary wing and tail pins just bursting. A number of birds were still coming in at dusk, but from their numbers it would appear that most of the chicks had fledged. In May there were large numbers arriving at dusk, and frequent calling throughout the night. Some birds had laid and were incubating. Occasional fresh eggs were found on the surface. They were very common in the surrounding sea, and in May a raft of 30 to 40 birds was seen near the island.

Black Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*. One bird seen on the north coast in 1971. Not recorded by Storr.

Australian Goshawk, *Accipiter fasciatus*. In May 1971 one pair nested in a *Callitris preissii*, 15 m above the ground. The two chicks were in down but with the primary wing feathers well developed. A Great-winged Petrel with its brain peeked out was found under the nest. Not recorded by Storr or in 1976.

Wedge-tailed Eagle, *Aquila audax*. One seen soaring over NW end of the island in 1976.

White-breasted Sea-Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucogaster*. One pair seen. One skeleton collected near NE corner of the island.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*. In 1976 a single bird seen on a number of occasions.

Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*. One and possibly two pairs seen in 1971, not recorded in 1976.

Brown Quail, *Synoicus ypsilophorus*. Several birds flushed in Tussock land in 1971 and 1976.

Sooty Oystercatcher, *Haematopus fuliginosus*. Two and three birds were seen on the NE coast in 1971 and 1976, respectively.

Silver Gull, *Larus novaehollandiae*. Common around the coast. In 1971 15 birds roosted in the Succulent mat on the NE corner of the island. There was no sign of breeding.

Crested Tern, *Sterna bergii*. Only a few seen around the coast.

Brush Bronzewing, *Plaps elegans*. Common in the Tussock land and heath areas.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo, *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus*. Several heard calling in both 1971 and 1976.

Golden Bronze Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx plagosus*. Several heard on the top of the island in 1971. Not recorded by Storr or in 1976.

Kookaburra, *Dacelo gigas*. A number of birds seen in the tops of the gullies on the north side.

Welcome Swallow, *Hirundo neoxena*. Common on the top of the island especially over the Tussock land.

Pipit, *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. One bird seen in the Tussock land on the NE corner of the island. Not recorded by Storr or in 1976.

Broad-tailed Thornbill, *Acanthiza apicalis*. Common in all formations except the Tussock land and Succulent mat.

Spotted Scrub-Wren, *Sericornis maculatus*. Very common in the more densely vegetated areas of the gullies and on the top of the island.

White-breasted Robin, *Eopsaltria georgiana*. Only one bird seen in one of the larger gullies on the north-east side in 1971 and only a few seen in 1976.

Grey Fantail, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. Common in wooded areas throughout the island.

Golden Whistler, *Pachycephala pectoralis*. Only recorded in the larger and damper gullies with *Eucalyptus lehmanni* at the SE end of the island.

Silvereye, *Zosterops gouldi*. Common in small flocks of up to 12 birds throughout the island in 1971. In 1976 only a few birds seen.

New Holland Honeyeater, *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*. In 1971 uncommon on the NW end of the island, but common at the SE end where *Banksia praemorsa*, *Lencopogon* spp., *Gastrolobium bilobium* and *E. lehmanni* were flowering. In 1976 they were common throughout the island.

Red-cared Firetail, *Emblema oculata*. A few birds seen in the gullies on the NE side of the island and in the *Melaleuca* scrub.

#### DISCUSSION

A total of 27 birds have now been recorded from the island, 21 of them land birds.

Excluding migrants (Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Golden Bronze Cuckoo), vagrants (Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Pipit) and the raptors, the island has 12 resident land birds. This compares with the 56 species recorded in 10 km radius of Channel Point on the mainland opposite the island (Smith, unpublished data). Only the Australian Goshawk and the Wedge-tailed Eagle have been known to breed on the island, the other raptors appear to be visitors from the mainland.

Allowing for differences in observers and the timing of the visits there appears to have been no change in the species composition of the resident birds or any significant changes in their populations. One possible exception is the White-breasted Robin which Storr recorded as common in 1959; only one bird was recorded in 1971 and only a few in 1976.

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#### REFERENCES

STORR, G. M. 1965. Notes on Bald Island and the adjacent mainland. *W.A. Naturalist*, 9: 187-196.

### JOHN WOLLASTON'S BIRDS

By ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Harvey

*Wollaston's Picton Journal*, compiled by Canon A. Burton, reveals that Archdeacon John Ramsden Wollaston, in his record of events between April 1841 and January 1844, made a number of references to the bird-life of the coastal plain. Wollaston, of course, had no means of precisely identifying the birds that he encountered and, in endeavouring to describe what he saw, leaned heavily upon his English experiences. It is not always possible to identify precisely the species which he records.

The following is an abstract of references taken from the second edition of *Wollaston's Picton Journal* (Paterson, Brokensha: Perth) with an attempt to identify the birds in the light of present knowledge.

p. 5—"the horrid screech of the great black, or [of the] white, cockatoo". (The White-tailed Black Cockatoo, *Calyptorhynchus baudini* and the Long-billed Corella, *Cacatua tenuirostris*. The Corella no longer occurs in this area, but *vide Birds of W.A.*, Serventy & Whittell, the Long-billed Corella was frequent in the early days of settlement).

p. 17—"Emus are rarely seen. . . I have seen wild turkeys". (Emu, *Dromaius novaehollandiac*, and Australian Bustard, *Eupodotis australis*).

p. 25—"a beautiful parrot, called here 'twenty-eight' from the noise it makes resembling those words." (Port Lincoln Parrot, *Barnardius zonarius*. It would appear from this reference that 'Twenty-eight' a name still commonly used for the coastal race of this bird, was in use from the very early days of settlement in Western Australia).

p. 28—"of swallows we have a few and excessively tame; so much so that one cherished pair built in one of our rooms and fly over our heads as we sit at meals. They resemble the martin but I have seen two sorts. There is a beautiful little bird too here very familiar which we call the robin. It has a brilliant red breast and its habits resemble that of England, but it is smaller and much more delicately made. We have moreover a pretty black and white bird like a wagtail, very tame and frequently seen on the backs of animals. There is a difference, however, in its department—it moves its tail horizontally instead of vertically." (Welcome Swallow, *Hirundo neoxena*, and probably, Tree Martin, *Petrochelidon nigricans*, Searlet Robin, *Petroica multicolor*, and Willy Wagtail, *Rhipidura leucophrys*. It is evident that the vernacular names used were applied then as now. Also mentioned are "some cockatoos.")

p. 35—"We have plenty of tame parrots in two or three varieties, very beautiful. Also a white cockatoo . . ." (The most likely parrots would be the Port Lincoln Parrot, the Red-capped Parrot, *Purpureicephalus spurius*, perhaps the Western Rosella, *Platycercus icterotis*).

p. 43—"a diver and a wigeon". (No Australian waterfowl closely resemble either the European divers or the Wigeon so one may only speculate upon the species to which reference is made. (Musk Duck,